

PHILIPPINE INSTALLATION ART FROM 1970 TO 2008 AS THE DISCOURSE OF THE PHILIPPINE POSTCOLONIAL AVANT-GARDE

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Abstract

The paper maps the artistic production of installation art in the Philippines and dissects the aesthetic impulses of its contemporaneity as a basis of constructing the narrative of the Philippine Postcolonial Avant-Garde. This Postcolonial avant-garde is defined as those artists whose aesthetic positions are articulated through aesthetic newness and innovation originating from Western High Modernism, but foregrounded within the condition of postcoloniality. This concept argues the premise of installation art by these practitioners as discourses in modernity, nationalism, nativism, hybridity, and “internationalism,” which this study deems as an epistemic practice in global mimicry. I will also argue in this paper that the practice of installation art in the Philippines produces the contemporary symptoms of native and indigenous privileging among local practitioners. Such a practice also implicates the use of cosmopolitan and western aesthetics in their discursive articulation. In addition, the conditions of diaspora and migration among some practitioners have also impacted upon the practice of installation as a hybridized gesture. The confluence of the term “postcolonial” as a cultural discourse and condition and “avant-garde” as an appropriation of western aesthetic position foregrounds the postcolonial avant-garde as a key category in constructing a history of texts, institutional practices, material conditions of aesthetic production, and epistemic views on Philippine art.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, avant-garde, installation art

Introduction

The production of contemporary art, as fueled by the context of Philippines postcolonial modernity, is informed by the narratives of national- global contact, exchange, and transfer. This context becomes a moment re-imagining the contemporaneity of installation art in the Philippines but, at the same time, reveals the asymmetry of aesthetic productions between the national and the global.

Considerably, the 1970s is a critical matrix from which we can gauge the contours of what this study terms as the “Philippine postcolonial avant-garde.”¹ It was in this decade that the State had intensely sponsored the cultural and artistic production of the Philippines. The ideologically motivated modernity through the New Society Project (1972-1986) was set under the Marcos regime. First, the notion of national progress and development that reverberated in the social condition was paralleled through the state-sponsored aesthetics of “developmental art of the Philippines” (1971- 1986). Second, the nostalgic re-construction of “Filipino identity” that came from the “cultural amnesia” brought by the havoc of three centuries of colonialism was pursued. The inaugural of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) in September 1969 was believed to establish a kind of “cultural renaissance” of the country. (Lico, 2003) Finally, the continuous mass migration of Filipinos abroad also implicated foreign-based Filipino artists to carry the notion of artistic practice as cosmopolitan, and yet racially burdened by their otherness abroad. The Marcoses utilized this international otherness by inviting these artists to come home and exhibit as *balikbayans*², and invest Philippine Art with their globally hyphenated and hybridized aesthetic positions.

The artistic agents whom this paper will refer to as the Philippine Postcolonial avant-gardes are engaged within the (dis)positions of envisioning the modern-ed future of Philippine Art as, however, bound by a framework of “nation-ed art” coming and arising from the discourse of colonial narratives, and yet finding themselves entangled within the networks of globality. This entanglement occurs when Philippine cultural production attempts to situate itself within the global/international arena that both stages the progress and modernization of the [post-colonial] nation in the west’s image, while at the same time extracting this cultural production’s native identity in order to project its fetishistic value within the capital and touristic markets of the “first world.” This is found in the arts program of the CCP Museum during the Seventies, when its curators accepted this dual premise as part of their exhibition and aesthetic practice—*informed, once more, by what Lico (2003) termed as the Marcoses “edifice complex.”*³

Crucially, this cultural production on the part of both artists and curators manifest a doubled gesture of aesthetic splitting: on the one hand, the desire to be both modern and “international” that denies the particularity of nation in deference to a universalist co-equality with Western Modern Art, and thus, its acceptance of this Modern Art’s notion of the avant-garde as the penultimate manifestation; and on the other, the defiant foisting of native identity as an essentialized vision of nation-ed otherness that distinguishes this production from other, more hegemonic states. Seen in particular through the conflated artistic practice of installation art, this paper proposes to foreground a transdisciplinary framing in new art history by utilizing postcolonial theory as the binding medium in the theoretical construction the term: Philippine postcolonial avant-garde. The Philippines here is encountered as an epistemic site of modernity and nationalism that manifest the symptoms of postcoloniality. Hence, the term “Philippine

Postcolonial” manifests what Homi K. Bhabha (1994) refers to as ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry. This is due to the realization that:

It is in the emergence of the interstices--the overlap and displacement of domains of difference--that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. How are subjects formed 'in-between', or in excess of, the sum of the 'parts' of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc.)? How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable.

This narrational condition reframes and re-orientes the practice of Installation Art at the CCP as an arguably avant-garde aesthetic occurring within the uneven and split-and-doubled epistemic terrain of Philippine Modern Art as sponsored by the CCP, one which subscribes to Western Modernism’s notion for art to be positivistic, forward-looking, alienated, formalistic, and universally “truthful”, while existing in a topography distinctly outside of both the West and Modernism itself. Hence, the premise of “performing” the position of the Philippine Postcolonial avant-garde within the hermetic confines of the CCP becomes an instance of “narrational deconstruction” that opens the texts of its agents in the simulation of [Philippine] art as [Modern] history. Thus, by investing in the term, a stringent critique of the effects of both imperialist western hegemony, as well as nativist nationalism in the epistemic formation of contemporary Philippine art, can be revealed, and how the production of this practisational aesthetic among the Philippine postcolonial avant-garde has been complicit to the formation of dichotomies in Philippine art histories’ textual narration.

Cosmopolitan Modernity, Neocolonial Territory

As a manifestation of Imelda Marcos’ goal of transforming the CCP into the “center of the Filipino Soul,” the curatorial program of the CCP Museum under, first Roberto Rodriguez aka Chabet (1969-1970), and then Raymundo Albano (1971-1985) adopted the curatorial direction that what forms of Philippine Art will be supported by the CCP will be infected, by and large, with the conscious strategy of mimicking then-prevalent art museum strategies of privileging Modern Art as a symptom of modernity, and the Philippines’ co-affiliation with the international alliance of the “free world” led by the United States.

This conscious – if painfully self-pitying – cosmopolitan allegiance of the state-sponsored modern artistic strategy can be seen from the *CCP Marks*, one of the short-lived journals released by the CCP. In its pages, the unidentified writer proposed that,

When the next international biennale of art will invite us, at least we will not be accused of being ignorant...⁴

Roberto Chabet and Ray Albano, both internationally-trained artists became the early curators of CCP from 1969 - 1970 and 1971 - 1985, respectively. Their international exposure is determined by the fact that the state-sponsored CCP wanted to submit the institution to the standards of the international community when it comes to curation and museum management.

The two curators were given the authority to consecrate the artists that comply with their vision:

Artists that enlightened, enlightening with a liberated vision... committed to more profound theorizing... They achieve new visual experiences befitting a changing civilization or society... defiant of expectation and fixed notions on the nature of art... They have opted for integrity... toughness risking taking to preserve the ideals in the visual arts. (Albano, 1988)

The utterance have become the parameter of the artistic and aesthetic articulation of most often young artists that are allowed to exhibit inside the institution, several activities were set to further reinforce this privileged episteme like the CCP Annual exhibits, the series of journal publications of the CCP Philippine Art Supplement and the always resuscitated Thirteen Artists Awards, a state-sponsored award giving body that recognizes the viability of young artists' experimental and innovative production. Roberto Chabet, consecrated as a pioneering artist of conceptual art." (Chu, 1994)⁵ and is also known to "keep the avant-garde fires burning" (Guillermo, 2001) after David Cortez Medalla left for London in the 1960's. He fueled the experimentation of the avant-garde in his term as the curator of the CCP. He started the Thirteen Artists Award, where he controversially granted it to his privileged cohorts. He also formed the Shop 6, an informal group of artists composed of what they called the "Chabet babies". It is composed primarily but not exclusively by Yolanda Laudico, Joe Bautista, Rudy Gan, Fernando Modesto and Boy Perez. Their exhibits usually follow the traces of the Duchampian mode of display that adventurously explore the cosmopolitan nature of art as anchored within modernist notion of "art for art sake". Minimalist in nature, their artworks used every day mundane object that can be discarded, disassembled and rot.

Allan Rivera's "Room/ Riddle", 1975, philosophically contemplates about the nature of art when he installed a table, rocking chair and rusty electric fan in the exhibit room of the CCP. On the top of the table is a note that says "Buy me, I am Art!"

Yolanda Laudico's "Three Works", 1975, turns mundane and quotidian objects into art. She used dried leaves with black grease, residue of square photo cut outs collected from different ID photo stores, and cut pieces of woods. The objects of Laudico were hanged on the white wall exhibit area of the CCP Gallery,

as if consecrating the object in its new status as art with the platform of wholeness and unity. As the artist expressed, she always like artworks that surprises her and she will not indulge in mediums that will not excite her.⁶

The artworks presented during their time -- the 1970's -- were assumed to be artworks that are always ready for adventure, surprising, controversial and artworks that were not yet validated by the Philippine artworld. This investment towards the controversial, inventive and new art production relies largely to its fidelity to form while at the same time, it fleshes out from these productions the conceptual episteme of dematerializing the objects. The performative impulse that reverberates from the these artists is the agency of the western avant-gardism, a notion of individual artistic-centered artworks and object-centered intimating with the concept of the artists.

One of Chabet's mentor Judy Freya Sibayan who also became a curator of the CCP from 1987- 1989 recalled that Chabet would oftentimes invite his students to his place to literally look at the images of the artworks-- but not to read it-- coming from internationally circulated western art publications⁷. This was also echoed in and Victoria Herrera (1994) who stated that:

The conceptualism in art the CCP Museum was a direct quotation from the New York phenomenon encountered mainly through reading American art publication such as Art News. Former CCP Museum, curatorial assistant, Marian Pastor Roces recounted how artists then circulated copies of this art journals to discuss recent trends and other aesthetic problems.

The practice of updating and retinal habitus-ing or familiarization of the artworks from western mainstream artworld trends is geared towards the positioning in the international- western artworld. Alice Guillermo(1896), a known Marxist art critic called this internationalist articulation of Philippine art as

mindless copies of the latest art trends abroad no matter how out of context these maybe.

It should be noted that the installation and conceptual art production in the West, specifically in the United States, emerged outside the institutional and state-sponsored frame. These artworks in the US were used as a direct critique to the existing social conditions at that time, the Anti- Vietnam War and other social movements in race, gender, class and ethnicity.

The framework of internationalist cosmopolitan nation uttered by the regime when looked within the spectrum of what Nestor Garcia Canclini elucidated as modernity, modernization and modernism does not necessarily cohere or parallel with each other.⁸ While modernist aesthetics enjoyed the "autonomy of art" in its engineered "Philippine Modern Art" and Conceptualism, the country is in intensifying political unrest, economic distress, growing poverty line and ballooning debt and corruption in the whole bureaucratic system of

dictatorship. Ironically, this aesthetic movement whose goal is to investigate and explore the “nature of art” successfully flourished inside the institutional frame of the CCP and within the context of such bureaucratic dysfunctions.

Furthermore, the state – sponsored artistic production have peripheralized and “othered” the language of social realist art production. The luxury of making CCP, not only accused of being elitist during the Marcos time, as an aesthetic laboratory of experimentation of the chosen young, adventurist, innovative, non-commodified artists became a façade to hide such dysfunctions. It also postures a democratic and autonomous art-making in the country, a necessary condition in order for the international community to turn to the Philippines as emerging reliable site of economic and cultural enterprise.

Curator Raymundo Albano celebrated the success of the decade of Developmental Art in the Philippines and contemplated on the public’s interrogation of the trends of Philippine art that has proliferated during the whole decade. One question that was raised was “The works are not Filipino?” and CCP answered “On the other hand, neither are they European or American”.

The statement exhibited a liminal condition of art making playing within the dichotomies, between West and Philippines, an ambivalent impulse of what Bhabha elucidated as produced through the “strategy of disavowal and splitting”, the developmental arts’ own epistemic and aesthetic ambivalence.

Undeniably, the social condition and cultural episteme set by the regime still reverberates within the present context of Philippine cultural production. On the other hand, such productions are always constantly rehearsed either through repetition of aesthetic production or corrective mechanism of revisions or expanding beyond towards more institutional and artistic innovation depending on whose power holds the wand the institutional art-world-ing.

Nativity as “Essential” National Identity

The CCP’s reliance towards indigenism as a “desirous performance” of “authentic Modern Philippine Art” and embodied through installation since 1979 can be seen through the CCP’s exhibition schedule.

While Raymundo Albano continued the one year curatorial legacy of Roberto Chabet, he also made a turf in the further emergence of installation art. It was in his term where the conscious usage of the term “installation” as an artistic institutional prerogative and can be said as our “own” art production. He (1981) states:

Given the freedom to work on practically unconditioned space, an art idea becomes more meaningful. The fact that a sculptor no longer depends on gravity alone changes attitudes towards the concept of art itself, which is why many artists continually work on installation. Now if one were to ask, how this art came about—among artists—it calls for some musings on the local environment. Have we not seen them before? In the *Pahiyas* of Lucban, in the jungles of Los Banos, in

our jeepney, in our fiestas, in our religious traditions. If one were to consider a medium's intimacy to folk patterns, installations are natural born against the alien intrusion of a two dimensional western objects like a painting... Installation is a case that should support the fact that painting as art is a pure western phenomenon and that it speaks a language foreign to the Filipino.

The articulation paved way when he found confidence over the works Junyee's indigenous utilization of materials as what he calls as the "residue of nature" like dried leaves and branches, soil and anything organic in nature was imaginatively turned with a new visual interest, idea and element. Junyee, even before, has been doing installation art as a site work. Outside the Institutional frame, however, it was Albano's accommodation that both popularized the term installation art, the artist and the utilization of indigenous materials. Almost some of Albano's text privileges installation as corollary to indigenism and the use of the often interchangeable terms of "modern" or "contemporary" art.

Junyee's first solo exhibit at the CCP in 1981 was "Wood Things". Junyee used dry banana stalks and kapok pods. It was assembled to imaginatively come up with a structure of relatively big insects/bugs. As Guillermo (2001) explains, it "gives the impression of crawling in the floor and up the white walls of the gallery". The bristling insect forms evoke strong sensations of texture and prickliness, as well as the sense of playful fun." Albano's anchorage on indigenous materials as installation art is to extract the assumed "essences" which is rooted to Filipino-ness and reconfigure it as a modern form of art making that sums up a kind Philippine in Philippine modern art.

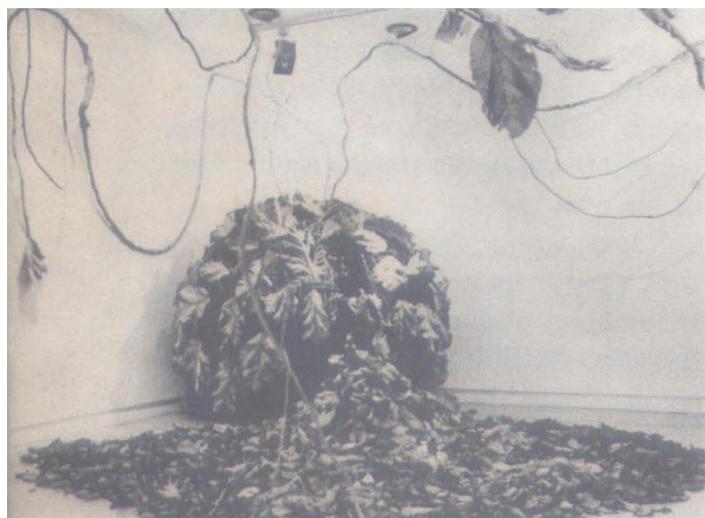


Figure 1. Junyee's installation from the "Arts from the Region: Baguio/ Los Banos" exhibit at the CCP, Untitled, 1980.⁹

On November 3, 1980 during the Symposium in Contemporary Asian Art in Fukuoka Japan, Albano had seen Philippine art to abandon paint and canvas-- as manifestation of the West -- by making new practices yet foregrounded within more immediate and closer tradition and environment. He (1981) states:

An exhibition series, " Art of the Regions " at the Cultural Center of the Philippines ushers in the 80's with a campaign for a new attitude. It liberates artist from the guilt of abandoning their native, authentic or Filipino character. It focuses not on alien artists but on what is individualist, what belongs to his region. It corrects the biases of pseudo- nationalist attacks by back-pointing at the sources of western art... Westerners recognize Asian influence as something vital to their art. It is a fact that sometime we forget this matter and we feel that borrowing is such a grievous, traitorous but inevitable act. But the 80's in Philippine art will have to remove this bias and adopt new processes and materials from the environment-- even if it entail a deformalization of art itself .In the end, paint and canvas may no longer be important for us.

The reliance, on the other hand, to installation was rather a miscalculated move as it seemingly pegs installation vis-a vis indigenous materials into stereotype of the region. In other words, outside the center of Metropolitan discourse of artmaking--Manila--where indigenous and installation could be qualified. This is manifested in the exhibits and examples, the composition, recognition and the encouragements from the agents to the regions like, Los Banos, Lucban, Baguio, Bulacan, Iloilo, Bacolod, Cebu, Calbayog City, Tacloban and Davao.¹⁰ This only manifests the assumption that Manila as a gateway of western information is impure and such necessitates an intervention from the periphery of the global inflow to attune the aesthetic cultural production of its "Filipinity".

Luis Enano "Junyee" Yee was raised in Mindanao before moving to the mountain town of Los Banos. Roberto Villanueva, on the other hand, was a local of Baguio City-another mountainous province where the rich ethnicity and tradition struggles to exist. Villanueva's artwork, Archetype Cordillera Labyrinth, 1989, built an environment of sacred Cordilleran practice. Out of 45 in diameter and 600 meter length of bamboo and reeds, he built a labyrinth where the center is covered with bed rocks from the river and bul-ul, the spirit God of the Cordillerans. Villanueva's gesture re-interprets the indigeous and installation as an epistemic representation to advocate the nostalgic return to the past, however, renders the outwork as self-exotic, essentialized aesthetic. Villanueva's work provides us another view of re-interpreting the usage of indigenous materials as a nativist act of going back to the past.



Figure 2. Top view image of Roberto Villanueva installation , "Cordillera Labyrinth," 1989 at the Installation Cultural Center of the Philippines open field.¹¹

The contemplation that constitutes the highly elusive question of construing the "Philippine in Philippine art" continued to struggle even during the post- Marcos era. The newly installed officers re-orient the CCP's goal towards the Filipinization of art production of the CCP through "the encouragement of original works by Filipino artists, and the development of new forms of artistic expressions deriving primarily from indigenous traditions." (Sta. Maria, 1998) The stance of Sta. Maria is a conscious reminder of its Filipino inheritance and at the same time a strategic critique directed upon "copies" and western artistic hegemony.

The batch of 1992 awardees which includes Roberto Villanueva was under then CCP visual arts director and curator Pandy Aviado.¹² The awardees included by Aviado were artists who exhibited the tendencies of the indigenous art movement, and represented different regions of the country. The impetus on Aviado's part was the larger project of further promoting the aesthetics of indigenism and its materials, the advocacy of the Indigenous Art Movement in the "developing and underdeveloped countries", and advancing the "indigenous artists" to establish a "new global art form". This movement led into a manifesto on November 1991 during the Havana Biennial by Pandy Aviado and Junyee. Aviado (1992) further asserts that during the Southeast Asian Indigenous materials workshop

Traditional cultures now provide artists with a basis to develop *artforms truly expressive of being Filipino...* Many artists using non- conventional materials (indigenous material) convey patriotic sentiments. (emphasis mine).

The manifesto positioned the use of indigenous materials as it supports the economic pragmatic of the artist for being cheap and available in every locality of the nation and identity formation and resistance against the West.

The late CCP curator Sid Hildawa Gomez (1997-2009) reconstructed these epistemic implications of the indigenous in reconsidering the history, critique, dialogics, active engagement and re-view of Philippine contemporary visual art for the Philippine Centennial in 1998. He stressed the transformative role of the past, and the traditional in the context of re-examining the canons, and social conditions in the vortex of postcolonial nation. He repositioned the juxtaposition of the “traditional with the contemporary”, asserting that the “role of the native culture as a proponent of national culture...looks bright, as Filipino artists of today experiment with hybrid art forms.” (Hildawa, 1999)

Global “Aesthetiscapes”: Artists’ Imagination at Home and Abroad

It can be surmised that the performatives of the postcolonial avant-garde necessitate a kind of global staging as symptomatic of recognition and direct interrogation and resistance against the imposition of western artistic hegemony. The internationalist impulse that manifest in the global inflow and outflow of artistic production is the result of intense neo-liberal globalization both in the terms of cultural productions and mobility of people in the global arena.

Several Filipino artists who have decided to move from the Philippines to rest of the world have become active participants of the global operations. Their installation artworks manifest both cosmopolitan and indigenist impulses that interrogate and position their visibility to their sponsored nation-states. Santiago Bose, although not a migrant artist, exhibited “Travel of the Bones”¹³ in “Baguio/Los Banos Exhibit”. The artwork reveals the question of global mobility, colonial memory and re-patriation. The installation piece is a luggage made out of bamboo frame and contained human bones inside the luggage. The archeological investigation of the remains of the dead reverberate several representations that deals with travel and nativity and creates an uncanny feeling of the colonial and postcolonial symbolic violence. It is a well-known fact that several archival knowledge and archeological pieces became in itself diasporic as evidences of colonial possessions. These remains signify as the missing bones of the Philippines colonial historical memories kept within the institutional knowledge of the former colonizers. Furthermore, in the midst of mass migration the bones also represents the deeply inscribed “Filipino-ness” of millions of Filipinos that shares the narrative of home amidst mobility of global Filipino.

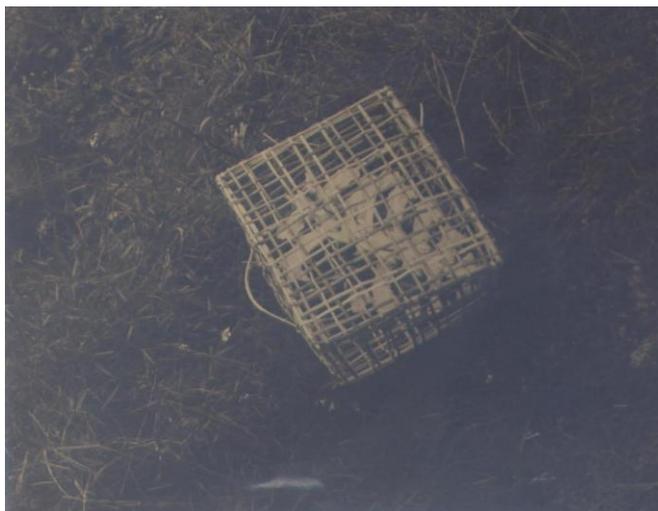


Figure 3: Santiago Bose's installation "MALETA, Documentation on the travels of the bone" Trends in Sculpture Exhibit at the CCP, 1980¹⁴

Global mobility and labor as the locus of travel becomes one of the subject of Imelda Cajipe Endaya's installation "Ang Asawa ko ay DH" (My wife is a Domestic Helper). Cajipe- Endaya, who is also a migrant artist/worker in New York, USA, executed in her installation the female body which is shaped by materiality and objects of domesticity, labor and migration. The body of installation is made out of an open suitcase that contains personal objects. The installation is propped up with different materials such as brooms, dustpan, mop and iron. Cajipe Endaya renders the body of the woman as a contentious site of global mobility. She critiques the apparent global feminization of labor. Nefarti Xena Tadiar explains Cajipe-Endaya's installation as female body being "kasangkapan" (household utensils and tools) "a kind of objectification of subsistence labour or domestic work in and as the instruments and means of subsistence"¹⁵. Cajipe-Endaya's work signifies how the Filipina / Pinay body is "ikinakasangkapan" (being used and devised) as the Philippine's major global export, the servant of the world. It is a well-known fact that the term *Pinay* or Filipina is now being constructed as the language of different country that directly connotes as domestic helper.



Figure 4. Imelda Cajipe Endaya's "My Wife is a DH", 1995¹⁶

The condition of diasporicity and migrancy in the era of global labor refunctions the subjectivities seen in the work Cajipe-Endaya . The utilization of critique and interventions in the lives of Filipino migrant workers searches for the resettlement in the midst of global displacement. The artist couple Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan, immigrants of Brisbane, Australia re-function their personal belongings as engagement between the performative leaving from its place of origin (Philippines) and their becoming to its new sponsored home(Australia). Big transport carton boxes were used to cast their belongings in order expose the politics of be-longings, possessions, memories, homes, nostalgia and thread of affinities. Their installation artwork "Belonging Series-Address" (2007-2008) -- exhibited in Singapore International Biennale -- are things and packages that signify the material and affectual unpacking and repacking of agencies and its belongings as the bodies situate itself within the flow and circulation of global capital between home and abroad. The material belongings represents not only materiality of global products but at the same time the anxieties and social guilt and relations of being detached from their love ones at home. "Address" magnifies the notion of home and affiliation in the midst of Filipino diasporic and migrant workers' nomadic experience and displacement in their mental, social, economic and physical lives. The "Address" through the *balikbayan* boxes serves as the location of liminality of the body, through the inflow and outflow of materials and value that manifest the shrinking of the globe as migration and diaspora track the global desires of Filipinos and the desires of the globe.



Figure 5: Maria Isabel and Afredo Aquilizan installation "Address", 2008¹⁷

The flow of globalization has implicated the lives of Filipino artists and the national life. It has opened the space for the Filipinos to take the path of being transnational bodies. The Filipino artists' mobility have pushed and stretched the limits of cultural and national borders and boundaries. They explored, reimagined and occupy the political terrains of global aesthetiscape in their installations artworks in order to engage the questions and complexities of identities at home and abroad, global mobility, geopolitics and global becoming.

Conclusion

Woven from the epistemic polyglotal utterances of the institutional practice of installation, the paper reveals the threads of nationalism and Philippine postcolonial modernity in the installation artworks. The strands that set its narrative locate the Philippines national cultural becoming. The Philippine postcolonial avant-garde movement thus emerged within the articulation of its "other" at this point the West sets the empowerment of the postcolonial avant-garde through western exposure and contacts. The practitioners of this movement, which the thesis calls the "Philippine postcolonial avant-garde," were encouraged by the conditions of aesthetic production enunciated by this discourse of modernity and artistic autonomy to further their own artistic projects and careers as key players of Philippine Modern Art.

The paper has shown the politically-charged aesthetic space in terms of not only activating the discourse of "Modern Philippine Art." Rather, the paper also pointed out how the politics of inclusions and exclusions in the consecratory space of the CCP "produces" Philippine art history through the enunciation of Installation Art as a key text.

The post in Philippine postcolonial avant-garde refers to a “postness” in coloniality that signifies a “clearing gesture.” (Appiah, 1991) This is now conflated in an ambivalent manner with the terms “Philippine” (signifying a place and ideological identity) and “avant-garde” (a modernist aesthetic position), thus problematizing the construct of contemporary Philippine art as a manifestation of “native consciousness” and “modern artistic expression.” The Philippine postcolonial avant-garde is thus seen as a hypertrophy produced under the conditions of neo-colonial and modernist politics, programs, and narratives, that indicates the scale of “reflection” and mimicry that occurs in the postmodern divide between the cosmopolitan metropolis and the marginal national capitals.

Through the conflation in the form of the term “Philippine postcolonial avant-garde”, the paper allowed us to magnify the trajectory of Philippine modernity as it occurred from a prominent narrational site of cultural production, and the manner in which the agents of the Philippine artworld conceive, produce and consume art. The “traces” of the avant-garde in this textual instantiation of postcolonial possibilities is the manner avant-garde’s artistic agency has resisted the commodification of art and from which newness is contextually re-imagining the future.

Endnotes

¹ While the materials and texts of installation art is largely foregrounded within the parameters of CCP and the Marcos period the paper will also stretch its historical trajectories by including the post- Marcos period and materials outside the institutional parameters of CCP. This allows the paper to further track the contours that have shaped the narrative of installation art and the Philippine postcolonial avant-garde.

² A term that refers to the temporary return of Filipino immigrants to their home-town, extended family or the nation-state in general.

³ See Marcos, I.R. *Sanctuary of the Filipino Soul*, Speech delivered at the formal dedication of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1969. The CCP was originally envisioned by Imelda Marcos as a Filipino “Parthenon” that served as a “Shrine of the Filipino soul”..

⁴ See Marks, 1974 through Herrera, V “ Government Support for the Visual Arts The Cultural Center of the Philippines and the Museum of Philippine Art, 1969- 1985” (. MA thesis University of the Philippines Diliman 1994) , 159.

⁵ See R. Chu’s entry of the brief biography of Roberto Chabet in “Vol. IV Philippine Visual Art” *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art*, ed. Nicanor Tiongson (Cultural Center of the Philippines Manila. 1994) , 327.

⁶ See Yoly Laudico utterance through Flores, P.D. The Art of the 70’s Missing Links, Burned Bridges. *Pananaw 2 Philippine Journal of Visual Arts* (2004), 57

⁷ The assertion of Judy Freya Sibayan was recounted during the forum at the CCP on February 27, 2009 in celebration of the 40 years of the CCP and about the exhibit entitled "Suddenly Turning Visible, the Exhibit at the Center"

⁸ See Nestor Garcia Canclini. "From Utopias To the Market," *Hybrid Cultures, Strategies for Entering and Living Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 13-15.

⁹ Photo taken from "Installation: A Case for Hanging." In *Philippine Art Supplement*, Vol. 2 No 1, CCP Manila, 1981. Courtesy of the Cultural Center of the Philippines Library. (accessed February 18, 2009), 3.

¹⁰ These are the regions and localities in the Philippines often mentioned by the actors of Philippine art stereotypically being referred as the source of indigenous materials.

¹¹ Photo uploaded from "http://members.tripod.com/in_the_bag/roberto.htm", posting unidentified. (accessed November 5, 2009) Dimension, 45m in diameter and 600m in length.

¹² Artists awarded by the 1992 CCP Thirteen Artists Awards under the leadership of CCVA director and curator Pandy Aviado were Fil dela Cruz, Manuel Baldemor, Soler Santos, Sandra Torrijos, Onib Olmedo, Paz Abad Santos, Brenda Fajardo, Nunelucio Alvarado, Tomy Hafalla, Willy Magtibay and Roberto Villanueva. Cesare A.X. Syjuco, on the other hand known for its cosmopolitan conceptualism was the only artist included on the said award.

¹³ Done by the artist Santiago Bose in 1981 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines

¹⁴ Dimension unidentified. Courtesy of the Cultural Center of the Philippines Library (accessed February 18, 2009)

¹⁵ Tadiar, Nefarti Xina, "Domestic Bodies" *Fantasy Production, Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences for the New World Order*. (Ateneo de Manila University Press, Manila, Philippines 2004), 133

¹⁶ Installation of suitcase, plaster statue, books, plasterbonded papier mache, and other found objects. Unsigned and dimension unidentified. Exhibited with the Japan Foundation's "Asian Modernism Exhibition" in Tokyo, Manila, Jakarta & Bangkok. (photo courtesy of the artist)

¹⁷ Photo uploaded from <http://bearbeardiary.blogspot.com/2008/11/singapore-biennale-2008-south-beach.html> posted November 8, 2008 (accessed November 5, 2009). Dimension unidentified.

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